

NAME FILSON ZEPHA VIRGINIA
(last) (first) (middle)

Biographical Material

Birthplace Painesville, Ohio Date May 29, 1919

Education Graduate of Harvey High School in Painesville ('37) and of the
Cleveland School of Art in 1942.

Special Comments I have also taken various P. G. courses at the art school
under Glenn Shaw and Frank Wilcox. Before art school, I had private lessons
with Clarence Carter

Awards and Honors (including others than those received in Cleveland)

2nd prize in "illustration", May show '44; Hon Men. freehand drawing May Show '42;

3rd prize in freehand drawing May Show '44, 2nd Prize in Illustration May Show '47

Affiliations (artists' societies, etc.)

None

Where Represented in Permanent Collections (Among private collections include only
large and important)

Cleveland Museum of Art, donated by Print Club; Print Club; Mrs. Paul Moore

Exhibitions (list by years)

Large Annual Shows May Show 1942, 43, 44, 45, 47; Denver, Colo. Annual Exhibit in
'44 (did not submit entry in May Show in 1946)

One Man One show - Painesville

Special (or Foreign) None

Bibliography In recent years, Two newspaper articles. Cleve. Plain Dealer
Feb 5, 1947 and an Acme News Service feature which appeared in various
newspapers over the country in March 1947.



May Show - Biographies
Tilson, Zepha

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CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 1947

Girl Polio Victim Surmounts Disease in Career as Artist

BY PAUL B. METZLER

Being stricken with infantile paralysis at the age of 5 and paralyzed from the neck down has proved no insurmountable handicap to Z. Virginia Filson, children's artist and illustrator.

Today, 21 years later, she is a regular contributor to Highlights for Children, a magazine edited by Dr. Garry C. Myers, formerly of Cleveland. A Cleveland School of Art graduate, she has been a consistent winner at the annual May Show of the Cleveland Museum of Art in the freehand drawing group. Even now she attends a graphic arts class at the school.

Miss Filson, still paralyzed from the waist down, with the aid of a wheel chair is self-sufficient and earns her living with free-lance art work. She cooks her own meals, attends classes and sells her work. She says she can "do everything that everybody else does."

In Bed Five Years

Living with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Clifford C. Filson, in Painesville, she was stricken with infantile paralysis and hospitalized two years. She was a bed patient three years more. Gradually she regained the use of the upper part of her body. Encouraged by her mother, a one-time artist and school teacher, she started home tutoring. She bounded ahead, two grades at a time, to join her school friends and enter Painesville High School at the age of 13.

After being graduated with honors she came to Cleveland and set up a studio at her present home, 1697 E. 115th Street. Working for downtown stores as a fashion illustrator upon leaving art school, she soon obtained enough free-lance work to spend all her time at the studio.

Miss Filson specializes on animals and children and created the characters for the Bear family, Woozy, Poozy and Piddy and the momma and papa bear. They caught on,



WINS OVER POLIO. Stricken as a child of 5, Z. Virginia Filson is a magazine illustrator at 21. Despite handicaps she was graduated from high and art schools.

and she illustrates the story every month.

She uses the brush and ink technique with a crispness that distinguishes her work. She strives for action drawing and human interest appeal with pastel and water colors as well, and her work has the professional quality of an older and more mature artist.

Miss Filson said she was fortunate that she did not have to wear the 25-pound braces that she used until she was 13. The braces were awkward and fitted her body from the neck down. She remembers her first Cleveland trip to visit the stores when she rode in her wheel chair and was thrilled to be with so many people.

She was one of the first to join Possibilities Unlimited, in September, 1945, so that she could help work with amputee war veterans.

After reading about a man afflicted with poliomyelitis who traveled from Nebraska to Warm Springs, Ga., in a wheel chair, Miss Filson, with two art student girl friends, started planning a trip to Hawaii.



Z. Virginia Fillson,
1697 E. 115th St.,
Cleveland, 6, Ohio

May Show Photographs - Fillson, Virginia

Z. Virginia Fillson

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The Cleveland Museum of Art

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